



State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

June 3, 2025

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 16

ESTABLISHING THE NORTH CAROLINA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CANNABIS

WHEREAS, the safety and well-being of North Carolinians, particularly our youth, is paramount; and

WHEREAS, cannabis with intoxicating levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is widely available and unregulated in the state of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the current lack of regulation, including age, potency, and purity limitations, poses a threat to all North Carolinians, particularly our youth; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the rate of emergency department visits in North Carolina for intoxicating cannabis ingestion among children and youth ages 17 and under increased more than 600 percent, and among older teens, the rate increased more than 1000 percent; and

WHEREAS, despite various legislative efforts to address cannabis, the cannabis market remains unregulated and unsafe in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, according to recent polling in North Carolina, there is widespread support for legalizing medical marijuana, with 71 percent in favor and only 19 percent opposed, and 63 percent supporting adult recreational use of intoxicating THC; and

WHEREAS, more than 325,000 people have a misdemeanor marijuana conviction in the North Carolina court system, and for 80 percent of those people, the misdemeanor marijuana offense was the most serious charge in the case; and

WHEREAS, rather than allowing this unsafe and unregulated market to continue, smart and balanced regulation presents an opportunity not only to protect the health and well-being of our people, but also to generate revenue that can benefit our state; and

WHEREAS, the creation of an advisory council provides the structure and opportunity for North Carolina to develop a thoughtful and thorough approach to cannabis that is grounded in public safety and public health and that incorporates the expertise of relevant leaders and advocates; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article III of the North Carolina Constitution and N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143A-4 and 143B-4, the Governor is the chief executive officer of the state and is responsible for formulating and administering the policies of the executive branch of state government; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 147-12, the Governor has the authority and the duty to supervise the official conduct of all executive and ministerial officers.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in the undersigned as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of North Carolina, **IT IS ORDERED**:

Section 1. Establishment and Purpose.

The North Carolina Advisory Council on Cannabis (“Council”) is hereby established as an advisory council. The Council shall study and recommend options for a comprehensive statewide approach to cannabis that is grounded in public health and public safety considerations, informed by lessons from other states and experts, and focused on the protection and safety of North Carolinians, especially our youth.

Section 2. Membership.

The Council shall be composed of no more than thirty (30) members, including chair(s). All members shall be appointed by the Governor and serve at his pleasure. Members are appointed for a term of one (1) year and may be reappointed for successive terms. The Governor shall select the chair or co-chairs to lead the Council. Members shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from the following groups, as well as a representative with expertise in tax policy:

- a. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- b. North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- c. North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
- d. North Carolina Department of Transportation
- e. North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management
- f. North Carolina Department of Justice
- g. North Carolina State Highway Patrol
- h. North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts
- i. North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission
- j. North Carolina General Assembly
- k. North Carolina farmers
- l. Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- m. District Attorneys
- n. Public Defenders
- o. Chiefs of Police
- p. Sheriffs
- q. Business community
- r. Medical professional community

Section 3. Duties.

In studying and recommending options for a comprehensive cannabis policy in North Carolina, the Council shall address, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Protecting our youth, including laws regarding age limits, advertising directed at youth, packaging that appeals to children, and child-resistant packaging.
- b. Ensuring adequate cannabis use prevention models for youth and cannabis treatment models for youth and adults are available in community.
- c. Supporting public safety, including enforcement of laws against impaired driving and additional tools for law enforcement.
- d. Promoting public health considerations, including public education campaigns, surveillance to monitor public health harms, and potential marijuana prescriptions for treatment.
- e. Elevating regulatory considerations such as potency and flavor limits, purity standards, and retail restrictions.
- f. Advancing justice, including expunging past convictions that do not align with the recommendations of the Council, including for simple possession of marijuana.
- g. Recommending appropriate government regulatory structure, including sales restrictions and taxation, and staffing to effectively implement the Council’s recommendations to the benefit of the state.

The Council shall consider examples from states that have addressed cannabis and incorporate any lessons learned from those states in its recommendations. The Council shall further consult with other local, state, and national experts and industry actors, as appropriate. Both during the study and upon the release of its recommendations, the Council will advance public engagement, including and especially with members of the General Assembly.

The Council shall provide advice and guidance on any other matter as referred by the Governor.

Section 4. Meetings and Deliverables.

Beginning in July 2025, the Council shall meet as a body of the whole at least every other month through December 2026 and at other times at the call of the chair or the Governor. The Council may conduct meetings using electronic conferencing or other electronic means. The Council's meetings shall be governed by the North Carolina Open Meetings Act, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.9, et seq.

The Council shall submit its preliminary recommendations for a comprehensive cannabis policy, including any proposed legislation, to the Governor by March 15, 2026, and its final recommendations by December 31, 2026.

Section 5. Administration.


The Council shall serve without compensation but may receive per diem allowance and reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with state law and Office of State Budget and Management policies and regulations.

The Council shall be staffed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Section 6. Effective Date.

This Executive Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until May 31, 2027, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 147-16.2, or until rescinded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capital in the City of Raleigh, this 3rd day of June in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-five.


Josh Stein
Governor

ATTEST:


Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State

